



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
July 25, 2007

For More Information, Contact:
Michelle Feist
West Nile Virus Surveillance Coordinator
North Dakota Department of Health
Phone: 701.328.2378
E-mail: mafeist@nd.gov

North Dakota Reports First West Nile Virus-Related Death in 2007

Please note: The following information will be discussed at the 2:30 p.m. media availability.

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health today announced the state's first West Nile virus-related death in 2007, according to Michelle Feist, West Nile Virus Surveillance coordinator for the Department of Health. In addition, 10 other new cases were identified.

The individual was a resident of southeastern North Dakota who died while hospitalized. According to Feist, the man was older than 60 and had underlying medical conditions.

"This unfortunate death is a reminder of the seriousness of West Nile virus, especially to the elderly and those with other medical concerns," said Dr. Craig Lambrecht, chief field medical officer for the Department of Health. "For many people, West Nile virus infections cause only mild symptoms; for others, however, the infection can be very serious. I urge residents to continue to take steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites and this virus."

To reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes that carry West Nile virus, the state health department recommends the following protective measures:

- Use insect repellent that contains DEET and is approved by the Environmental Protection Agency. (Read all instructions carefully.)
- Limit outdoor activities between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most likely to bite.
- Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts when possible.
- Eliminate stagnant water and leaf debris in containers around homes where mosquitoes can lay their eggs (e.g., buckets, flowerpots, old tires, wading pools and birdbaths).
- Keep mosquitoes from entering your home by repairing screens in windows and doors.
- Keep the grass around your home trimmed.

-- more --

600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept. 301, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0200
Phone: 701.328.2372 Fax: 701.328.4727 E-mail: health@nd.gov

Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

The following is a summary of West Nile virus activity to date:

- Human cases – 25
 - Total tests conducted – 332
 - Counties: Burleigh (5), Cass (6), Dickey (2), Griggs (1), LaMoure (1), Morton (2), Mountrail (1), Nelson (1), Ransom (1), Stark (1), Stutsman (2), Traill (1), Walsh (1)
- Human deaths – 1
- WNV-positive dead birds – 7
 - Total dead birds tested – 10
 - Counties – Burleigh, Cass, Grand Forks
- WNV-positive live birds – 0
 - Total live birds tested – 179
- WNV-positive horses – 2
 - Total horses tested – 5
 - Counties – Burleigh, Richland

“It’s important that everyone take precautions to avoid mosquito bites,” Lambrecht said. “The mosquito most likely to transmit West Nile virus is called *Culex tarsalis*, which are showing up in higher numbers than normal for this time of year. It takes only one bite from an infected mosquito for someone to catch West Nile virus.”

For more information about West Nile virus, visit the health department website at www.ndhealth.gov/wnv or contact Michelle Feist, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2378.

The Department of Health’s policy on confidentiality and release of information about West Nile virus deaths is available at www.nddohpressroom.gov.

-- 30 --

Please note: To access archived news releases and other information, visit the North Dakota Department of Health Press Room at www.nddohpressroom.gov.